

# NEWSLETTER

## A FAIRY TALE CASTLE

*“CORROY-LE-CHÂTEAU, BELGIUM”*



*On September 22, 2008, many wondered if the fairy tale would end.*

Located just south of Brussels, Belgium, in the middle of the Orneau Valley, this fairy tale castle, Corroy-Le-Chateau, was scheduled to be sold at public auction to the highest bidder, settling a long-running family dispute over its use. Bidding was to begin at 2.1 million euro.

The magnificent and historic castle, constructed around 1270 by Earl Philippe de Vianden and his wife, Mary of Brabant, is a unique

example of medieval architecture in a classical neo-Gothic and neo-Romanesque style and remains in perfect condition.

This 740-year-old castle features a beautiful master hall and chapel, with rare marble and decorative masterpieces. There are 80 rooms including a ballroom, 20 bedrooms, and 10 bathrooms. Its majestically decorated parlors, beautiful corridors, bright interiors, and sweeping staircases each with their own independent entrance. With its moats, drawbridge, towers, and inner embankments, Corroy-le-Chateau was difficult to conquer. However,

Continued on page 3

**Thursday, April 15**

First Club Meeting of the year  
7:30pm at the schoolhouse  
in Namur

### Gembloux, Belgium

Thirteen members of the Peninsula Belgian American Club will be greeted by members of the Wallonie Wisconsin Society when they arrive in Gembloux, Belgium on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Gembloux**, Dijblou (in Walloon), is a Walloon municipality located in the Belgian province of Namur., population 22,000. Villages include: Gembloux, Beuzet, Bossiere, Bothey, Corroy-Le-Chateau, Ernage, Grand-Leez, Grand-Manil, The Isnes, Lonzee, Mazy, and Sauveniere. (Note: Lincoln, Kewaunee County, Wisconsin was originally named Grandlez, after Grand-Leez where Belgian founding emigrants came from.)

The history of Gembloux goes back a long way to the locality's Celtic origin. Traces of the Gallo-Roman era have been found in Gembloux along the Bavay Cologne Roman road crossing the city. Subsequent to a time of prosperity in the 2nd century, Gembloux had to contend with the Germanic invasions. These incursions were so violent that the inhabitants were compelled to leave and seek protection. This resulted in people settling on the rocky promontory where the historical center of Gembloux is located. A Merovingian tomb (7th century) was discovered there, in 1935, during excavation works when creating new buildings for the current Faculty of Agricultural Sciences.

Continued on page 5

**Some of the best fishing in Southern Door County can be found at Chadoir’s Dock!**

This 5-acre county park on the shore has an excellent boat launch, protective seawall, and several docks. Nearby waters of Green Bay provide local fisherman with excellent fishing opportunities. Chadoir’s Dock also serves as an emergency harbor of refuge for small boats.

In 1927, the first act of the newly formed Door County Park Board was to purchase the land now known as Tornado Memorial Park. Chadoir’s Dock County Park was added to the park system in 1944.



*Near Chadoir’s Dock - - photo by Kim Potier Davis*

“Tornado Memorial Park”, is located northeast of Brussels and remains open today as a highway wayside. It is near the site of the former village of Williamsonville, which was destroyed by fire in October 1871 and the location where many Belgians lost their lives. One man told of the horror he saw when black corpses were loaded on wagons like

cordwood, as they were being hauled on the stage route towards Dyckesville for burial in a common grave. Williamsonville’s 5-year old shingle and sawmill and the homes nearby, had been destroyed by the fire, and most of the employees had perished. The mill and the homes were located on the site of Tornado Park.

“Chadoir’s Door County Park” is located in the Town of Union, on the bayshore near Namur. The dock was purchased from John and Mamie Chadoir by the county of Door in 1944 for \$2,000. Chadoir’s Dock began as a working dock that served the Belgian community well. It was built by brothers Eli and Julius Chadoir some time after they arrived in Namur from Belgium, in 1856. Ships moored their with passengers and goods, and local farmers were able to export beets, potatoes, corn, lumber, hay and straw for the market in Green Bay and elsewhere. The docks were especially busy in the Fall of the year, with a dozen or more wagons waiting to unload their cargo. Schooners would bring in a variety of goods they carried for the farmers, from kitchen ranges and farm implements to horses, cows and other livestock. The local fishing boats also used the docks to load and unload their catch. People from Brussels and the surrounding area rode a steamboat, the Nettie Dennisen, from Chadoir’s dock to Green Bay and Oconto.

Today, the dock continues to provide access to the Green Bay waters for fishing perch, bass, walleye, and whitefish. A spawning reef 1 mile from Chadoir’s dock makes it one of the best areas for catching walleye. From the time the ice goes out and for 45 days until really hot weather, you can almost touch them off the dock.

Chadoir’s is also the 2nd busiest county park for launching boats. In 1997-98, the harbor was enlarged by 80% and many improvements were completed. The area is partly wooded, has over 625 feet of shoreline and has been a favorite picnic spot for people of the vicinity for years.

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**Belgian Film Showing!!**

Please join Belgian filmmaker, Xavier Istasse and Rene' Georges, for the showing of this hour long, locally filmed documentary which features Northeast Wisconsin Walloon heritage.

The film will be shown **FRIDAY, APRIL 2 at 6:30 pm.** at Northbrook Country Club/Lower level.

You will be able to order DVD's of the film at a cost of \$12.00 with shipping & handling included.

If you have any questions regarding the film please contact Myra Tlachac 920-845-2444 or Linda (Mathu) Jadin 920-845-1108. [lindajadin@centurytel.net](mailto:lindajadin@centurytel.net)

**Date Correction - - Fr. Daems article in Nov. '09 Newsletter:****The reason there are Belgians on the Door Peninsula: Father Edward Daems**

Door County's Belgian community owes much to Father Edward Daems. It was Father Daems who in 1856 1853 convinced an early detachment of Belgian immigrants to Wisconsin that they should abandon their initial claims to land (their first land claims were located near Kaukauna) and instead locate in his parish at Bay Settlement and Robinsonville.

**CORROY-LE-CHATEAU**

from the moment you enter the courtyard one gets a feeling of peace. The castle is a historic fortress but with many modern conveniences including cable t.v. and internet access. Remodeling was completed to enlarge the courtyard during the 18th century to accommodate the many guests who were attending balls, and arriving by carriage.

**Family History**

The *Orbais family*, descendants of Godfried I of Brabant was the original owner of the Castle of Corroy. The oldest known lord was Baldwin, Lord of Orbais in 1095. His descendant Aleida would marry William of Brabant, Lord of Perwez. Two generations later, *Mary of Brabant married Count Philip of Vianden*, son of Henry, Marquis of Namur and Marguerite de France Courtenay, the daughter of Peter, Latin emperor of Constantinople.

Then time passed and the alliance went to the East and the Holy Roman Empire. At the end of the fourteenth century, Elizabeth of Sponheim, daughter of Simon and Mary Vianden first married Count Engelbert III. In a second marriage, she wed Robert Count Palatine of the Rhine, son of emperor Robert of Bavaria and Elisabeth von Hohenzollern-Nuremberg. They had no children so the castle went to a cousin, John V, Count of *Nassau-Dillenburg*.

Corroy was then taken over by the eldest son of John V, named Henry III (1483-1538). Henry III was married four times, including once secretly with Elisabeth Rosembach. Then came a son named Alexis who was offered the lordship by his half-brother Rene de Chalon, *Prince of Orange*, son of that Henry III and Claude de Chalon. Claude was the daughter of John II, Prince of Orange and Philibert of Luxembourg.

*Alexis*, who was governor of Mouzon and legitimized in 1545 by Charles V., is the lineage of the Counts of *Nassau-Corroy* who retained Corroy-le-Chateau until the tenth *Marquis of Trazegnies, Gillion*, son of Eugene and Marie-Victoire. Their dynasty was remounted by the Germanic Baroness Eleonore von Bode, a wealthy young widow in her thirties, who was married in Vienna to Gillion's grandfather, Philippe-Ignace, an officer in a Hungarian regiment, who was the only remaining noble descendant of the Trazegnies family. The castle has been owned by the Trazegnies family since 1809 and is still the property of his descendant, the Marquess Olivier of Trazegnies.

**Auction Day**

Corroy-le-Chateau sold for 3.3 million euros (\$4.9 million) on September 22, 2008. In an active bidding session the medieval castle, Corroy-le-Chateau, was sold to Wm. Delvoye, a Flemish artist who indicated his intention to create a museum of contemporary art at the castle.

**The Fairy Tale Ending**

On October 30, 2008, a remarkable turn-of-events took place when the Marquis Olivier de Trazegnies, original owner, bought the castle back through a newly formed company called Marquis of Trazegnies-Count de Nassau, with the intention of placing the castle in the Royal Association of Historical Residences and Gardens of Belgium. The artist William Delvoye will have his artwork on display at the castle for three years. Corroy-le-Chateau remains inhabited by the Marquess Olivier de Trazegnies, along with his mother (life tenant) who was born in 1917.

The fairy tale continues for the Trazegnies family!

**PBAC Trip to Belgium**

Thirteen members of the Peninsula Belgian American Club will depart for Belgium on May 17.

Forty members of the Wallonie Wisconsin Society, sister club in Belgium, will join the Americans for a 6-day side trip that will take them through Germany, then into Denmark and Sweden.

Group events currently being planned in Belgium by the Wallonie Wisconsin Society include city tours and a farewell dinner.

PBAC members will return home on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

**HOMEMADE MAYONNAISE**



**Ingredients:**

- 1 egg yolk
- 1 spoon of mustard
- Oil
- Vinegar or lemon juice
- Pepper and salt

Make sure all ingredients are at room temperature! Mix together the egg yolk and mustard, add a little bit of vinegar (or lemon juice) and whisk well. Keep on whisking the mixture and add little drops of oil. The mixture should thicken slowly. Keep on doing this until it thickens to your taste. Finally add pepper and salt (be careful with this).

**“REAL” BELGIAN FRIES**

Some years ago, the term Belgian Fries started to be used more often to differentiate itself from “French Fries”. Bars, brasseries, and restaurants around the world served so-called Belgian fries but they didn’t know the difference between real Belgian fries and those they referred to as “French” fries. Just serving thick-cut fries does not make them Belgian Fries.

To make Belgian fries you need to start with a sharp knife, deep fryer, frying oil (any oil that can take the heat will do but will determine the taste of the fries), paper towels, and a bowl. Follow these instructions carefully and enjoy the wonderful taste of the real Belgian fries.

Start by peeling potatoes. Cut them in (3/8”) thick slices, then cut (3/8”) square (pointed ends tend to burn.) Dry the

fries well with paper towel before putting in the oil.

**Note:** *some people like to put them in cold water for a few minutes - - this washes out much of the starch and tends to make them less sticky after the first frying and more crispy after the second.* Heat the oil in a hot frying pan or deep fryer to a temperature of (320F). Fry a handful at a time so the oil won’t cool down too much and fries won’t get greasy. Fry for a few minutes, and stir regularly to prevent sticking. Put the fries into a large bowl with paper toweling and let them sweat for at least 1/2 hour. Finally, heat to (375F) and fry for 2 minutes until crispy and golden brown on the outside.

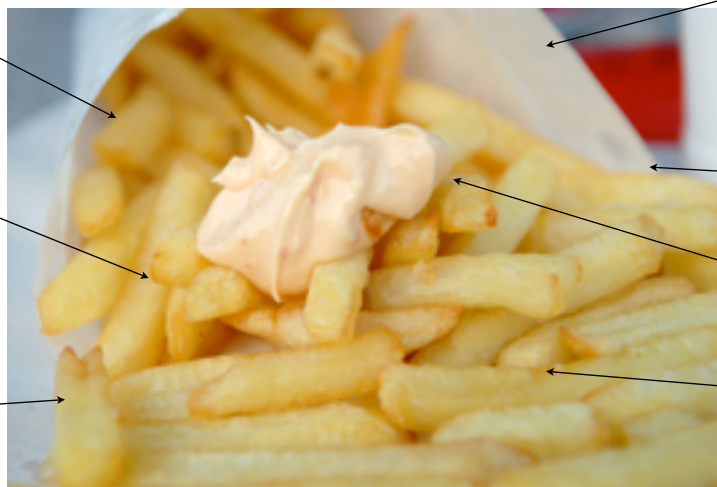
**A LIST OF NO-NOS:** Do not fry them the first time until they become brown. Never put a lid on your frying pan. Never use frozen fries!

Information from [www.belgianfries.com](http://www.belgianfries.com) published with permission by Michel A. Mes

Peeled and Fresh cut, irregularly shaped.

Start with good potatoes that have a distinct taste. (Bintjie is the best, but Yucon Gold or Russett will work fine in the U.S.

At least 3/8” thick.



Preferably served in a paper cone.

Fluffy and soft on the inside, crispy on the outside.

Serve with a little Salt and Mayonnaise.

Deep fried twice.

**GEMBOUX, BELGIUM**

Gembloux was founded by Saint Guibert in the 10th century along with a benedictine abbey. The 12th century was a disaster for Gembloux. The small town was incorporated into the duchy of Brabant. These two principalities were major rivals. Troops from the earldom of Namur launched several attacks on Gembloux during the 12th century, leaving the town devastated. During the second half of the 16th century, Gembloux was caught up in the religious wars and was even the scene of the battle on January 31, 1578, the victory of Don John of Austria over the United Netherlands. August 6, 1678 was the date of a huge fire that accidentally broke out, devastating the town. Not until the second half of the 18th century did Gembloux begin to enjoy a period of prosperity.

The French Revolution, the revolutionary troops' incursion into the Austrian Netherlands and their annexation to France in 1795 dealt the death blow to the Ancien Regime.

The earldom of Gembloux was dissolved, so the French succeeded in ending Gembloux's inclusion in the Brabant sphere of influence. The town therefore became a municipality of the department of Sambre-Meuse. The French Director also called for the religious orders to be abolished and their possessions to be confiscated in the name of the Republic. Gembloux abbey was eradicated and its possessions disposed of in 1797. The old abbey estate was bought by a French businessman, Jean-Baptiste Paulée. The abbey estate's religious purpose thus drew to a close. Pursuant to an imperial decree of 1810, the municipalities of Gembloux, Grand-Manil and Lonzée

were allowed to acquire the former Gembloux abbey to replace the dilapidated St. Sauveur parish church whose foundations dated from the 10th century. During the Battle of Waterloo, in June 1815, troops passed through Gembloux several times or were quartered there.

Founded in 1860, the University of Gembloux, is the oldest Belgian Institution of teaching and research devoted entirely to Agronomy and Biological Engineering.

On May 17, 1940, twelve aircraft of 82 Squadron, based at Watton, in Norfolk, took off to attack troop concentrations at Gembloux, Belgium, where the German army was sweeping West towards the Channel ports.

Once part of the powerful duchy of Brabant, the



town prospered from the cutlery industry that made such things as high-quality forks, knives and spoons manufactured under the brand name Eternum. Nowadays, the cutlery factories are closed and Gembloux is more renowned for its College of Agronomical Sciences, and for fathering the world's fastest car (the Vertigo, designed by local racing champion Tony Gillet).

The town has a charming Renaissance town hall (still called the Baillif's House), a small cutlery museum, and above all a huge 18th century abbey (now housing the college of agronomics). The adjacent St. Guibert's Church has preserved a Romanesque basement from the original abbey. "Gembloux's Belfry," a medieval alarm bell tower, is well hidden in a maze of cobble-stone alleys on a hill right in the center of town. In Wallonia and France they are called "Beffroi." Gembloux's Belfry was built in phases from the 12th-19th century. and rebuilt in 1906 after fire had destroyed it. The belfry is among other belfries of Belgium inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

**MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE PAYABLE BY MAY 31, 2010**

## Belgian Days in Brussels, Wisconsin

by Marie V. Bousfield

This summer, we decided to join the 47th annual Belgian Days celebration in Brussels, Wisconsin, northeast of Green Bay in Door County. This area has one of the largest concentrations of Belgian-Americans in the country, mostly Walloon but with some Flemish. While preparing for our trip, we learned about Wisconsin's Ethnic Settlement Trail on the internet and ordered a cassette tape for a Walloon Belgian Tour of Door, Kewaunee, and Brown Counties by auto. It arrived just in time.

On Friday, July 11, after the morning rush hour, we left Chicago, drove to Milwaukee, and continued north. Our first stop was a surprising find, a village called Belgium. We located the village hall with the Belgian flag flying alongside the American and Luxembourg flags. The Belgians who settled here in the 1850's came from the Province of Luxembourg. We stepped into a nearby restaurant full of friendly people and enjoyed a tasty meal.

Back on the road, we drove to Green Bay and then east to Casco where our auto tour was to start. Casco is a village with only 578 persons in the 2000 census, but 268 of these were of Belgian ancestry. Leaving Casco, we drove north and west amid large dairy farms with well maintained farmhouses and barns next to huge shiny silos. According to our tape, this area (Kewaunee County) once had the second largest cow population after Lancaster County in Pennsylvania. We passed the little town of Tonet where Baby Face Nelson may have once had a hideout.

Continuing west, we came upon the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. Here in 1858, a young Belgian woman, Adèle Brice, walking through the

woods had a vision of the Virgin Mary, who ordered her to devote her life to the wellbeing of children. The church leaders initially refused to believe her and even denied her holy communion. But Adèle was steadfast in her mission, became a nun, and devoted the next four decades to building a chapel, school, and orphanage here. Underneath the chapel is a small intimate crypt lighted by candles with a beautiful life size statue of the Virgin and crutches left by pilgrims.

Our next stop was Champion where the first Belgian families settled in 1853. They called this area "Aux Premiers Belges," and there is now a marker for them with a Belgian flag and fresh flowers.



These early settlers sailed from Antwerp to New York on the "Quinnebaug," a voyage that took seven weeks. From New York, they travelled to Milwaukee and Sheboygan mostly by canal boats and lake steamers. From there, they went to Green Bay where, per chance, they met a Belgian priest, Father Daems, who helped them acquire land from the federal government. They walked from Green Bay to their claims and started working: building shelters, clearing the land, growing food, overcoming illness, and surviving.

Next we went in search of a statue of Jean Nicolet, an explorer from Normandy and the first European to visit Green Bay. After a walk along the old abandoned and overgrown Route 57, just when we were ready to give up,

we found Jean Nicolet amid the trees and wildflowers in a secluded spot, tall and majestic, overlooking the Bay as he may have stood in 1634.

We then drove northeast to Bay Shore Park. In 1919-1929, it was the practice field for the Green Bay Packers when the famous Belgian coach Curly Lambeau led them to six world championships. The Packers stadium in Green Bay has been called Lambeau Field since his death in 1965.

At this point, we were getting tired and decided to drive straight to the town of Sturgeon Bay where we had reserved a room in the White Lace Inn, a Victorian home built in 1903 with period furniture and a beautiful garden. After dinner, we drove to nearby Potawatomi State Park and walked along the Bay. We read that the Potawatomi Indians were friendly to the Belgian settlers and helped them survive.

The next day, Saturday, we drove to the fairgrounds in Brussels for the start of Belgian Days. We first visited the tent of the Peninsula Belgian-American Club. The walls were covered with reproductions of newspaper articles describing events in the lives of the Belgian settlers, and the tables were filled with ring binders and books of interest to historians and genealogists. We spoke with Ken Guilette whose ancestors came from Wavre, Brabant, and settled in this area. We learned that Belgians arrived here by the thousands in the 1850's. They came mostly from French Brabant and the Namur region.

Of course, the main attractions were the tents serving Belgian food: booyah, trippe, jutt, and Belgian pie. Since I am Flemish, these terms were new to me. Booyah is a vegetable soup with chicken and sometimes oxtail; trippe is a very tasty bratwurst made of pork and cabbage; jutt is a mixture of pork, potatoes,

Continued on page 7

**BELGIAN DAYS**

and cabbage; and the delicious Belgian pie has a fruit filling topped with a ricotta custard. The nicest part of the lunch was meeting the local people of Belgian ancestry.

After lunch, we attended a reenactment in period clothing of the Great Fire of 1871. That year, the summer was so dry that the woods were a tinderbox. On October 8, many small fires joined into a wall of fire that moved through the area. The residents knew they were trapped. Some hid in wells and others assembled in prayer in open fields. Some survived but many died. Heartbreaking stories are told about this fire which destroyed almost all the houses and crops. Then, facing winter, the remaining settlers had to struggle to survive. That same day, October 8, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire broke out causing massive devastation and diverting the country's attention from the fire here.

After the reenactment, there was a lecture by Bill Laatsch, a geography professor at the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay. He delineated the large area of Belgian settlement here, and found that 80% of the land was still owned by Belgians in 1970. He believes that this high land ownership explains why so many Belgians stayed. Analyzing the 2000 census, I found 9 towns in this area where 40% or more of the population were of Belgian ancestry. This is unique in the country. The nearby City of Green Bay had the largest number of persons of Belgian ancestry of any American city in the 2000 census: 10,101 or 10% of the population.

Professor Laatsch talked about the local architecture. After the Great Fire, houses were built in local red brick. They generally had a gabled roof, a high circular window, and often an outdoor oven. Professor Laatsch also commented on the many Flemish

surnames found here and suggested that they may have come from Flemish who moved to Wallonia for work and subsequently emigrated. According to him, this area is now changing and the Belgian community may be entering a twilight stage. After the lecture, there was a bus tour, but unfortunately it was sold out, so we continued with our own auto tour.

We drove to Namur where an old school now serves as the clubhouse of the Peninsula Belgian-American Club. It is very active and organizes visits by members to Belgium in return for visits by their Belgian hosts to Wisconsin in alternate years. These visits are documented on a new DVD prepared by the Door County Historical Museum, and it is moving to see the Americans meeting their long lost Belgian relatives.

We then drove to Rosière where a September kermesse was celebrated for many years beginning in 1858. According to Alfred Vandertie who



was interviewed on the tape, the shopping and food preparation started on Friday, and the celebration culminated on Sunday with prayer, dancing, eating, and singing. Vandertie sang several Walloon songs, but we had a hard time understanding the words.

For our last stop, we visited Tornado Park, so named because the Great Fire swept through this area like a tornado. According to a marker, seven people sought shelter in a

shallow well here, but the two nearest the surface died. Close by, in the middle of a then barren field, sixty people assembled in prayer hoping that the fire might spare them but, alas, all died. We drove back to Sturgeon Bay thinking about this tragedy.

The next day, Sunday, was the Belgian parade. The crowd was surprisingly large with camp chairs several rows deep. Floats representing local posts of the American Legion and local Lions Clubs were decorated with Belgian and Walloon flags. Spectators cheered as veterans, fire engines, politicians, clowns, antique trains and cars, decorated tractors, and high school bands paraded by. The children had a great time gathering the candy that was generously thrown around. Everyone seemed enthusiastic, and there were banners saying "Today we are all Belgians."

Then it was time to drive home. With a big bag of Door County cherries and a promise to return next year, we headed back to Chicago.

"Article reprinted with permission from the *Gazette van Detroit* Vol. 94 Issue 20 of 10/2/2008."



**"Peninsula Belgian  
American Club"**

PENINSULA BELGIAN AMERICAN CLUB

1255 N 12TH PL  
STURGEON BAY, WI 54235

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

The PBAC is a non-profit organization that depends upon  
your support to help keep our Belgian Heritage Alive - - THANK YOU!

PLEASE CIRCLE ONE:            NEW MEMBER            RENEWAL

MS/MRS/MR/DR \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (HOME) \_\_\_\_\_ (MOBILE) \_\_\_\_\_

DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_ IN MEMORY OF \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIP RATE:    \$15 PER PERSON - - DUE MAY 31ST EACH YEAR**

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MAIL TO:    PENINSULA BELGIAN AMERICAN CLUB, 1255 N 12TH PL, STURGEON BAY, WI 54235  
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